

# Great Reasons to Buy Local

## **Locally grown food tastes better.**

Food grown in your own community was probably picked within the past day or two.

## **Local produce is better for you.**

A recent study showed that fresh produce loses nutrients quickly. Food that is frozen or canned soon after harvest is actually more nutritious than some "fresh" produce that has been on the truck or supermarket shelf for a week.

## **Local food supports local farm families.**

Local farmers who sell direct to consumers cut out the middleman and get full retail price for their food - which means farm families can afford to stay on the farm, doing the work they love.

## **Local food builds community.**

When you buy from the farmer, you are re-establishing a time-honored connection.

## **Local food keeps your taxes in check.**

Farms contribute more in taxes than they require in services, whereas suburban development costs more than it generates in taxes, according to several studies.

## **Local food is about the future.**

By supporting local farmers today, you can help ensure that there will be farms in your community tomorrow, and that future generations will have access to nourishing, flavorful and abundant food.

# What You Can Do

## **As An Individual**

- Spend \$10 per week during the growing season at a farmers' market, CSA farm or roadside farm stand.
- Ask your favorite grocery stores and restaurants to buy local and Michigan foods - then purchase it from them!
- Start a school garden or composting project. Volunteer to chaperone a classroom visit to a local farm. Prepare more fresh fruits and vegetables at home.

## **As A Community**

- Develop a local food directory to help identify places to buy locally produced food in your community.
- Sponsor "buy local" campaigns to encourage eaters to seek out locally grown foods. See [www.foodroutes.org](http://www.foodroutes.org)
- Develop a school fundraiser around locally produced foods. Educate the local school board about farm to school issues.

## **As A Municipality**

- Keep your community's food system in mind when making decisions about land use, planning and development.
- Encourage schools, hospitals and senior centers to regularly purchase local food to include in served meals.
- Partner with other governmental agencies to promote healthy eating.

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# Better Choices Through Local Foods

## Your Food... Your Community

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# What is a Community-Based Food System?

**E**ach community is unique, thus no two food systems are exactly the same. Community-based food systems emphasize relationships between growers and eaters, retailers and distributors of food. They give priority to local resources and focus on local markets.

Whether we are discussing Big Macs in Beijing, hunger in India, or deforestation in Brazil, the food that we eat on an everyday basis is linked to a broader global network of production and distribution that has a variety of cultural, social, economic, and environmental consequences.\*

Food, and local food in particular, provides an excellent way for us to learn about global relationships and, perhaps most importantly, how we can influence those relationships in a socially just fashion.\*

*\*With permission from Brian Thomas, an instructor at Saginaw Valley State University.*

## The System in Practice

Eating in such a system may involve purchasing some portion of your food directly from local farmers. Local farmers, in turn, purchase goods and services from local business people, keeping your food dollars within the community. Buying local provides Michigan agriculture with a viable market and thus helps keep farmland in farming and curb urban sprawl.

Community-based food systems support the entire community by making healthy food such as fresh vegetables easily accessible to everyone. Healthy individuals translate into a dependable work force and lower healthcare costs for employers. The strong sense of community encourages young professionals to stay in the area. In the end, a community-based food system is a wonderful opportunity to improve public health, strengthen the local economy, and develop sound land use stewardship. But it can only be done with a large number of community members working together. Strong connections and meaningful partnerships are needed.

## Elements of Saginaw's Community-Based Food System

- SVSU Greenhouse Project
- SVSU Sustainable Aquaculture Prawn Farm
- The Saginaw Family Child Care Network and the Downtown Saginaw Farmers' Market
- MSUE Family Gardening and Nutrition Education
- Downtown Saginaw Farmers' Market
- Hemlock Farmers' Market
- Frankenmuth Farmers' Market
- Hausbeck Pickle Company
- Star of the West Milling Company
- Hensler's Country Market
- T.M. Klein and Sons Honey Farm
- Saginaw Valley Bee Keepers Association
- Zastrow's Wholesale Popcorn & Supplies
- Lehman's Apple Farm
- Michigan Sugar Company
- Sugarbeet Advancement Program

